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AUTHOR Draves, Bill
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ABSTRACT

Ideas and suggestions for teaching adults in an informal setting, such as that in a free university, are presented in this booklet. It is suggested that volunteer teaching in an informal, nondegree setting with adults is a rewarding and satisfying experience. To help the volunteer teacher the following areas are discussed: how adults learn; why are you teaching; selecting a topic; writing the course description; when, where, how long to teach; publicity; preparing for a class; students as participants; dropout rate; modes of teaching; facilitation; leading group discussions; and course evaluation. (SF)

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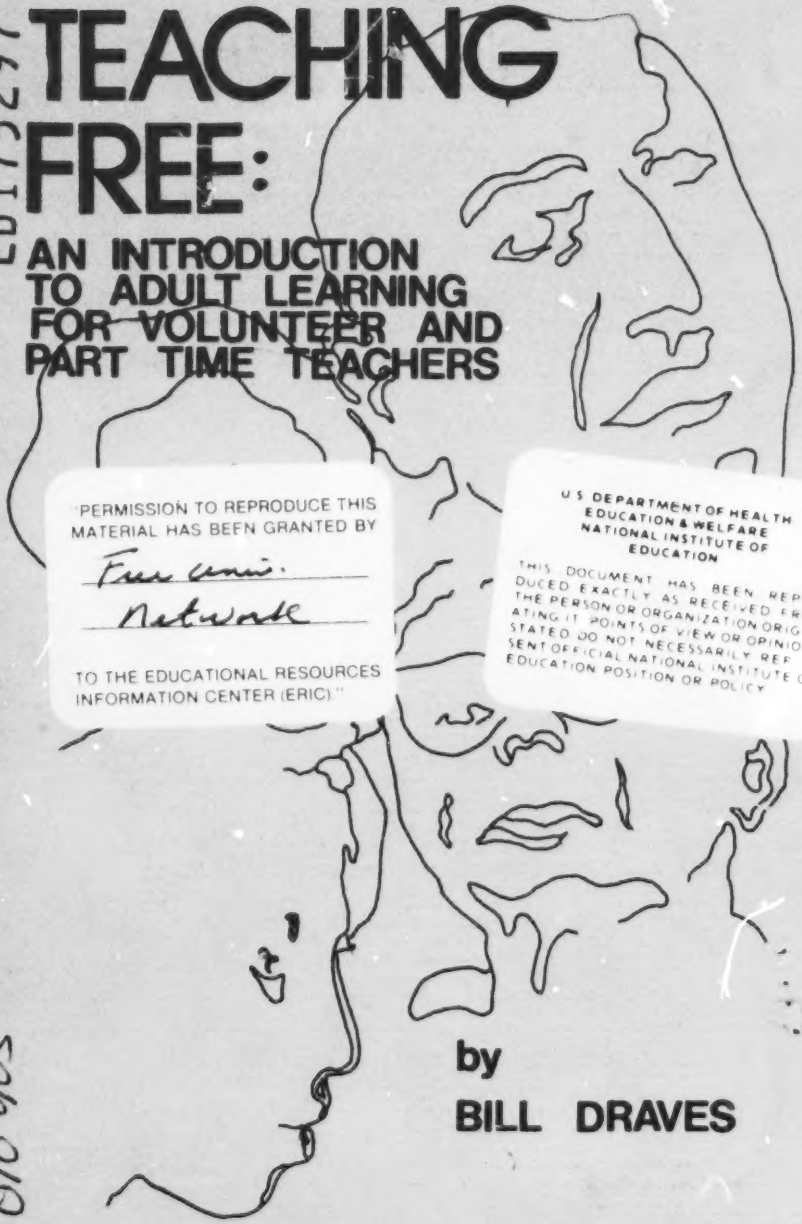
TEACHING FREE:

AN INTRODUCTION TO ADULT LEARNING FOR VOLUNTEER AND PART TIME TEACHERS



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by

BILL DRAVES

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Introduction

Sharing the knowledge that you have is one of life's most satisfying experiences. Offering an idea, a skill or training to someone else has a double effect: others enjoy the learning and you are rewarded by exchanging ideas and learning in return.

Volunteering to teach is special. It has its singular rewards, interactions and problems. The purpose of this booklet is to acquaint you with being a volunteer teaching in an informal, non-degree setting with adults. It is directed at the person who is teaching part-time without pay or for nominal reimbursement.

This booklet arose from the need to inform new teachers in 150 Free Universities in the country, but others may find it relevant also.

TEACHING FREE: AN INTRODUCTION TO
ADULT LEARNING FOR VOLUNTEER AND PART TIME TEACHERS

by Bill Draves

with thanks for review and comments to
Lona Jean Turner, John Hand, Sears Barrett and Sheila Russell

The Free University Network
615 Fairchild Terrace
Manhattan, Kansas 66506

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"Teaching Free" was written to acquaint you with some ideas and suggestions for teaching adults in an informal class setting. There are tips on choosing a topic, planning a course, and conducting a session.

You may want to read straight through the whole booklet, but more likely you will be interested in reading those parts that are of particular value to you. The sections are:

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What are you getting into

Welcome to the learning explosion! People are interested in learning just about anything these days, from practical skills like repairing a toaster to philosophical issues such as zen and life after death. Whatever you can teach, there are twelve people out there interested in learning it. There are more people involved in adult education activities than enrolled in high school and college combined. People are retraining for second and third careers, learning how to read, preparing tax returns, discovering new hobbies, developing a different life style. There are a thousand reasons why people are interested in learning, but they stem from two relatively recent developments-- (1) a better informed public exists today (even the so-called uneducated are more information-wise), and (2) more time and energy is being devoted to personal growth and development.

Because of the diversity of needs, people come to a class for many different reasons. Some want to make little money, some want to expand their horizons, some want to "make up for lost time", some want recreation, some want to change society, some want to meet other people. The plurality of adult learning today makes it exciting and challenging. Every person in the group has a contribution--an idea, feeling or experience.

How adults learn

Before you look for a blackboard and prepare a textbook for your class, consider your audience. Adults don't learn that way. How adults learn is not entirely known and is just beginning to be explored, but we do know two things: they don't learn like children learn, and they don't respond to school-like situations which are oriented to children.

Adults possess physical, psychological and sociological characteristics that affect their learning.

For instance, it has been shown an adult's capacity to learn decreases very little with age, but the rate of learning may be slower. That is, adults are capable of learning the same amount of material but it might take them longer. For adults who have been away from school a long time, reading and writing at length may be initially physically tiring as well as unfamiliar. Adults do not learn well in physical surroundings that are not comfortable. Good lighting, proper temperature and comfortable chairs are all very important.

An adult's attitude toward learning is also different from that of a child. Adults are very time conscious. To a twenty year old, the past is recent, clear and short, and the future seems endless. For an older adult, however, the past may be history while the future is short, clear and precious. As one grows older, time becomes increasingly important because there is less of it. So an adult does not want to spend years learning a skill or topic. S/he wants results fairly quickly.

Perhaps because of their time consciousness, adults tend to be problem oriented, concerned with specific concrete problems. For this reason, a course integrating a broad subject with a specific topic is more likely to appeal to a greater number of adults than an unspecific course. "Interpersonal relationships" may be more attractive than "Psychology," though both involve basic psychological concepts. "The Teachings of Don Juan" is a very popular free university course, while "Philosophy" is not, even though both involve philosophy.

Why are you teaching

This is not meant to be a navel gazing or guilt producing question, but it is helpful to have a basic idea why you want to share your ideas or skills.

Most people volunteer to teach out of a healthy self-interest, not from a sense of responsibility to help others. Teaching, even for free, has many rewards. Brushing up on the subject, "really understanding" the material, learning from others, getting new ideas from the participants, helping someone else, and expressing your thoughts are all benefits.

We want to teach because we have a need to share knowledge. There are two reasons for this. First we know more now. Every person has a wealth of information and skills to share with others. And secondly, there is a scarcity of ways to tutor or teach others. A few years ago we shared ideas through the family, church and other organizations. Today participation in these institutions is declining. While we know more, there are fewer avenues for expressing that knowledge.

Selecting a topic

A critical element in making your class successful is the topic you select to teach. For some the topic may be obvious, but for many people it is not. Everyone knows something that s/he can teach and someone else would like to learn. In fact, most of us know several topics we could teach. Selecting a topic and stating it in attractive terms is important.

Think of all your skills, everything you can do. What is your job? What activities do you do at work that would interest other people? What are your hobbies, things you do around the house in your spare time? What practical skills do you have? What ideas are you interested in discussing?

Most people are unaware of their skills or that other people would be interested in learning them. One participant at a free university approached a staff member and said that the free u. idea was great, he only wished he could teach something. He then proceeded to talk about his hobby of tanning rabbit skins. After fifteen minutes, the staff member remarked, "You've just outlined a whole course on tanning hides and skins." The next session found that person teaching a successful course with ten people.

After discovering a couple of skills or topics you could teach, deciding on one is the next step. You could teach two or three things, but what will be the best? What will lure the most participants, what will really interest people, what will I enjoy doing the most? Almost any course will interest somebody, but obviously some courses will be more appealing than others, and will draw more people if described in an attractive way.

In general, people will respond to a subject that is specific, practical, current and involving. Let's take that one at a time.

Current- There are some courses that are always current, such as practical skills, recreation and hobbies, arts and crafts. Other subjects are interesting today but not yesterday or tomorrow. Yoga is currently popular. It wasn't five years ago and maybe it won't be five years from now. The same with astrology. Current issues such as urban problems, national and international issues, come and go quickly. But you can relate a timeless subject to a current event and interest people. Instead of a course on literature, one English student offered "Women and Madness," a course that explored the concepts of women and sanity in novels. "Swimming and the Effortless Effort of Zen" combined swimming with a currently popular philosophical viewpoint.

Involving- The more the participants can get into the subject, discuss it or even do it, the better. "Baking Bread" would be a disaster as a lecture course, but done in the teacher's home kitchen with each student baking bread, it is an ever-favorite. Topics that suggest good group discussion are also attractive.

Specific- narrow down your topic. Don't do "Cooking," do "Baking Bread," or "Italian Pasta." The topic should be one that can be covered in a few weeks and one that people can immediately identify. What is "Philosophy?" But how about, "Modern Day Concepts of Death?" Don't offer "Psychology," but what about "Counseling Your Friends?"

Practical- Skill courses such as home repair, auto mechanics, sewing and typing are always popular. But other topics can be practical also. Instead of electricity, try a course on fixing electrical gadgets. Instead of math, offer a class on doing your tax returns. If a person can use it, s/he will be more likely to take the course.

Writing the course description

What you say about your course in one or two paragraphs is all your audience will have to judge it. You have to include what will be learned, how it will be done, when, where, why anyone should learn this, and what the participant will get out of it. And you have to be brief!

The course description should cover all of the topics mentioned above in short, concise sentences. Some items can be alluded to. For instance, if you are going to talk about an issue and the learning technique will be discussion, instead of writing, "We will spend time discussing the issue," write, "Discussion on..."

The title is very important. If it is a practical course, skill, art or craft, make it simple: "Home Repair," "Painting and Drawing," "Needlepoint." Anything else is confusing. The only time you might want to dress it up a bit is if there is competition from other similar courses or if your audience might not be interested in the subject unless you entice them.

If your subject is academic or idea oriented, you will want to make the title catchy or interesting. Some lousy course titles are: "Seventeenth Century Literature" (too general), "Creating Oneself" (too vague), "Catastrophism and Scientific Censorship" (too complex). Some good course titles are: "Too much month at the end of the money" (catchy), "Chinese Medicine" (specific) and "Bilingual Legal Terminology" (short and simple).

Be sure to include day, time, starting date, length and place. Omitting any one of these will make the course description confusing. For example, stating, "We'll get together and decide upon the best day," may give the impression that the instructor is vague and unsure about the course. It also makes it difficult for people to plan their own schedules.

When, where, how long

When to hold your class. Gear the time to your audience. Because most adults are working or in school, week nights are popular and convenient. Weekends place second, Saturdays, Sundays, Sunday evenings, Friday nights.

However, your audience might be special. If you are offering your course primarily for housewives or young mothers, you could do it during the morning if there is day care or babysitting available. A day course might work for second shift workers. Day courses are best held between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

How long should your classes run? Only as long as is necessary. A typical class runs two hours a night, one night a week for six to ten weeks, no longer. The subject matter might suggest something else. A discussion course might only go four weeks or a specialty course such as "Artificial Respiration" one or two nights. In some free universities, the topics are becoming more specific and consequently the class sessions fewer in number.

Where to hold your class. Even in our mobile society, most people don't like to travel very far to attend a class. The class location should be close to where the potential participants reside.

Publicity

Publicizing your course is a tricky business. It takes some experience to maximize the exposure of your course. If you are running a free university course, you will run the course description in the catalog. But there are other things you can do in addition to the catalog that might bring in additional people, and if you have the time, you might want to do one or more. It is a good idea to let the free u. administrators know what additional publicity you are doing.

-posters. In areas with a high concentration of potential class attenders, posters printed cheaply at a printer may be a good idea.
-flyers. A flyer can be printed and put in conspicuous places in grocery stores, laundromats, drug stores and office buildings.
-notices. Notices in church bulletins, in the newspaper, and in organizational newsletters cost nothing and are often effective.
-radio. Every radio station gives air time for Public Service Announcements (PSA's), so it doesn't hurt to type up a two sentence newsy announcement and mail it to a couple of stations. Stations often have a current events run down or a listing of community activities.
-special audiences. If you have a course that appeals to a certain group of people, special target publicity is going to be more effective than mass media and general publicity. A course on "Preparing for Retirement" might attract union workers, and contacting local unions and asking them to spread the word or even co-sponsor the course might make sense. For a course on house plants you would want to go around to every plant store in town and put up a poster. For a "Nutrition" course aimed at the elderly, contact nursing homes.
-talk it up. And don't forget to talk about the course with contacts and friends. The cheapest ad is word of mouth.

Some things that don't work very well are mailings to the general public and mass media advertising. A three inch ad in the Sunday paper may only get one participant while a free announcement on a popular radio station in the morning could get twenty.

Preparing for a class

Your course needs preparation. Each class session needs preparation. Even though you may know the subject backward and forward, a lack of preparation will leave you hanging. Teachers have thought they could go into the situation and just start talking. Ideas would flow spontaneously because they know the subject so well. Others have thought they would sit down and say, "Well, what do you want to talk about," and let the students ask questions to get the ball rolling. Neither approach works.

Classes take preparation. Even "over the shoulder" classes in which the students watch the leader repair a toaster or pot a plant need the basics of planning. For academic kinds of courses it must be more detailed.

Class preparation can be simple and not time consuming. What do you want to get accomplished? What are the overall goals? How much material can the participants handle? For a start, sit down and write out three to five goals for the course, things you want the participants to understand or be able to do at the end of the course. Then you can move on to planning each individual night.

Keep it basic. Anyone who is very interested in his or her subject matter would like to go into details, talk about all the divergent viewpoints, all the techniques, nuances and issues involved. But almost every one of your students will be a beginner who merely wants an introductory knowledge of the subject. The participants are not future experts in the field and you do not teach a graduate school course.

To prepare for each class, write down three to five points you want to get across for the session. Then ask what methods you will use, a "lecturette," discussion, show and tell, field trip, or demonstration. What resources will you need? What books, magazines, tools, equipment? What is your time frame? How long do you want to spend on any subject? An example of a class plan follows:

House Plants Course

Goals	Methods	Time
1. Introductions	go around the group	10 min.
2. Explain how plants vary in needs	illustrations hand outs	10 min.
3. Demonstrate potting a plant	pot two plants	20 min.

Planning is important. Participants want to benefit from each class. They want to be able to take something home with them--an idea or new skill. Check your plans against the desires of the class to see if you are planning what they want to learn. In each class session you will be selling the whole course again, because if the participant doesn't learn from the class s/he may not have the interest to show up again the next week. Unlike the school situation in which the students have to attend, you cannot afford to ramble too much, be too disorganized, or disinterest the participants. A little simple planning can help you avoid all that.

Students as participants

Your learning situation will be very different from a classroom. There will be many kinds of people with different experiences. That variety can be turned into an exciting learning process by playing on the experiences of the people in the group. Every person in the group has had some experience, and just as importantly, relates to what you are discussing from his or her own perspective. By utilizing the group members' own experiences the teacher can involve them in the learning process to a much greater degree than if the teacher utilized only his or her own experiences or merely asked for the members' opinions.

In addition to participation being a good process technique, the learning will be increased by utilizing the students as participants. The more they are involved in the group, the more people learn. People will also learn more by listening to and interacting with other group members. The teacher often learns from the participants who may offer alternative views on the subject. If the teacher spends less time in solo performances and the participants are involved in the group, people will be attentive and the learning will be enhanced.

Drop out rate

Every teacher should expect people to drop out of his or her class. Sometimes only a few people will leave and sometimes half the class will disappear, but you can count on somebody dropping out. Whether this has a debilitating effect or is expected often means the difference between whether or not the class is perceived as a failure.

One factor contributing to the drop out rate is the fact that the criteria for a voluntary class is so much higher than for a school class. For some reason, both the teacher and the participants expect a great deal more from the class than they would expect from a comparable class at a university. The participants want their time to be used wisely and are very sensitive to class sessions of low quality. The teacher is also very conscious of making the time together a learning one. Because it is so easy for the participants to walk out or just not show up the next time, each class has to be rewarding in order to attract the participants again next week. Since there are no outside inducements, such as credits or merely high cost, the voluntary class has fewer holds on the participants than does a traditional class.

Be this as it may, there will always be people dropping out of your class. Some people will discover that they know much of what is being discussed or learned. Others will find that the topic or subject is not quite what they had expected. Still others will sit in on a few classes and learn all they want to about a given subject. A few may have to leave because of extenuating circumstances such as illness, work responsibilities or family. These are legitimate reasons and ought to be considered so. People should feel free to direct their own course of learning and not be boxed in by a class situation.

Illegitimate reasons for dropping out of a class include disinterest and lack of self discipline. These of course are not under the control of the teacher and are hard to combat. A few words at the beginning of the course about responsibility to the group might be helpful. Beyond briefly mentioning this, the teacher can do little to keep people in the group in addition to preparing for each session and facilitating the group well.

Not all of this motion is negative. Some teachers have experienced a "reverse drop out," in which people come back later, additional people come to the class, or participants drop out and show up again when the class is offered in the next session. And it is not unusual to have participants bring along a friend or two to a particularly intriguing class.

Whether one person drops out or half the group leaves, the teacher should not let this hinder the class in any way. If you expect some people to drop out and don't attribute this to your own abilities as a teacher, you can concentrate on those who remain in the group.

Modes of teaching

For the informal adult-oriented teaching you will be doing, there are basically four types of learning formats, depending on what kind of subject you are teaching. Each one is designed to gain maximum involvement from the participants and be as attractive a process as possible. You should choose your format and then elaborate upon it, utilizing some techniques to enhance the model. Sometimes it is possible to use two or more modalities for one class, but usually the modality is restricted by your choice of subject.

Group Discussion Model The group discussion format replaces the formal classroom procedure. It is generally utilized for academic subjects, including current events, philosophy, personal growth, and other idea related topics involving reading and discussion. In order to prevent the situation from dissolving into a bull session or a case of the blind leading the blind, the teacher should introduce new subject material in an informal talk. Uninterrupted lecturing or one-way communicative styles should be avoided at all times. The group discussion is usually located in an informal environment, such as the teacher's or one of the participant's living room, with people seated so that they are able to see and respond to others. If the people introduce themselves at the beginning of the class, they will feel more open about contributing remarks and comments.

In the group discussion format, the teacher needs to develop creative ways of introducing material to the group and has to be attentive to involving a large proportion of the members in discussion. A knowledge of group process, facilitating and group dynamics are helpful for this format. The creative use of reading materials is a tricky area. Books and articles contribute greatly to the learning situation, yet reading assignments are often burdening to people who have little extra time for reading. Assigning one or two articles or a chapter of a book is one solution.

Over-the-Shoulder Demonstration The over-the-shoulder demonstration format in the informal learning situation is most often used with practical skills classes, such as small appliance repair, carpentry, and auto mechanics. The attractiveness of this format is that it brings into the group situation the material about which the group is talking. The location of the class should be in a room free of furniture that might get in the way. A church basement or meeting room is appropriate. The teacher starts by talking about a particular aspect of the topic, and then moves quickly into actually doing what s/he is talking about, e.g., fixing a lamp while the class looks on. It is important that people are able to get as close as possible to the action, so they can ask questions and discuss what is happening while the teacher is demonstrating. Then, depending on the resources available, the teacher can guide the participants as they perform the act just demonstrated (like fixing the lamp).

Sometimes a "chalk talk" on the blackboard or use of an easel for making a point enables the teacher to add theoretical points or ideas to the demonstration. Though seemingly simple, it is important with this model (as with the others) to plan objectives for each session. The format stays away from book learning and concentrates on the tangible, the concrete, thus making it a captivating format.

Show and Do Involvement Unlike the others, the show and do format revolves around the participants rather than the teacher. It is most often used in arts and crafts kinds of classes where each participant is to create or build something individually. Examples of the format are painting, drawing, chess, weaving. The method is the most involving, with each participant doing or learning while the teacher demonstrates. The teacher injects new ideas or suggestions either by going around to the people and making suggestions or by interrupting the group and introducing a new idea at once.

A variation on this is to take the group out of the classroom and into the setting where the activity takes place. Using a lake for sailing instruction or a garage for auto mechanics enhances the learning process.

Formal Classroom Instruction At times a formal classroom setting is appropriate for learning, and it should not be ruled out. Generally, the formal setting--a room geared for learning rather than relaxing, desks or chairs arranged to give the teacher maximum attention and authority, and a rather traditional approach to instruction--is inappropriate for adults who want neither credits nor job skills. But in some cases, basic education classes like writing and mathematics, or job skills classes such as typing or shorthand, a classroom setting may get results. Traditional approaches, individualized instruction and other methods could be explored here.

One final format should be mentioned, because it is used almost exclusively in free u. settings, and that is the project format. Projects are simply learning and doing situations in which the class works to produce something while they are learning. The advantages of this style of learning are twofold: 1) the group learns by doing, an acknowledged learning method, and 2) the people in the group gain a sense of accomplishment. Examples of classes in which the project method would be useful are dome building and community power structures. The first class would actually build a dome while the second group would research their community and write a report on their community's power structure.

Facilitation

In the past few years more emphasis has been put on the learner and less on the teacher. Perhaps this is a reaction to outmoded or poor teaching people have experienced. Perhaps it is just the evolution of adult learning and education. Whatever the reason, the word "facilitating" has become more common as a way of describing the leadership role in a group, replacing the notion of "teaching." In many cases the distinction is only semantic, but in others there is a real contrast in the way a teacher handles a group and what develops in the group both in terms of learning and interaction. Facilitation is essentially the skill of assisting others in a group situation. Its main feature is the absence of overt power, including the absence of any authoritative directives handed down by the teacher. Instead, the facilitator aids all members in the group to accomplish the group goal, which in this discussion is learning.

There is an interesting dichotomy in the literature of adult education which highlights the difference between the traditional approach to teaching and the new facilitation model of adult learning. It is the difference between pedagogy and andragogy. Pedagogy is the traditional approach to education. Pedagogy is the teaching of people, and the emphasis is on the method of instruction. The learners see the teacher as the active party, and the learners are responsible for picking up on whatever method or content the instructor is teaching. While pedagogy is the science of teaching, and parenthetically, in the Greek derivation, it is the teaching of children, andragogy is the science of adult learning. In andragogy the emphasis is put upon "how a man learns," and this may or may not include teaching. The focus is the learner, not the teacher, and the teacher's responsibility then is to discover how the participants learn and then to devise methods that will meet those learning needs.

Facilitating discussion is vital in an informal adult learning situation such as yours because the greater the involvement of the participants in the learning situation the greater the learning and satisfaction. As adults, the people in your group will have a wide variety of experiences and ideas that will add much to the class. Your solicitation of those experiences and thoughts will provide for a more informative and interesting learning experience.

In facilitating, the task is to be the leader without being the authority. That is, the teacher must abdicate the role of "master of knowledge" handing down information as if the participants were only recipients of knowledge. At the same time, one cannot abandon the role of leader and leave the group without direction. The facilitator enables the group to pursue its own desires and wishes within the context of the purpose of the group, and also provides the knowledge and information that people in the group need or wish to discover. It is a process of maximizing democracy in decision making and discussion. It is not simply a matter of sitting back and saying, "What do you want to do?" but of offering suggestions and alternatives, knowing what you as a person want to do with the class while remaining open to revision and change as group needs dictate. Some practical suggestions follow for implementing facilitation.

-- At the beginning of the session, you might want to ask people in the group what they expect from the class or what they want to learn, and revise your plans accordingly. This can be done periodically throughout the session to gauge if people are getting what they expected.
-- Secondly, in terms of group discussions, you should serve as the facilitator or group leader rather than as the teacher. More ideas on leading group discussions are given below.
-- Thirdly, emphasis should be placed on the learners' participating and "doing" as much as possible, including research, reports, demonstrations, and so on, whenever possible.
-- Fourth, members of the group could take on different assignments. They might lead the group in the discussion of a particular topic or the demonstrating of a particular skill or technique.
-- Fifth, the facilitator should try to highlight points raised by the group, especially when they would have been things you would have said anyway. By repeating what another person says, or just noting, "What you said Alice is pretty important..." you can bring out others in reaching answers.

A final word about one of the gatekeeping functions of the facilitator and that is time management. The clock weighs heavy in any informal adult learning situation. You want to end the class just before people run out of energy or interest, which is usually one and one half hours or so, and you want to keep within the time limit you set. It is a good idea to keep within the time limit, even when the discussion is good or people are still interested. You want to maintain a reliable closing time for mothers and fathers, people who want to schedule other things, or those who have appointments to keep.

You also need to watch the time during the class. Presentations, discussions, demonstrations, games all must be kept down to a reasonable length. If something goes too long, even a great presentation, it will lose its effect. Watch the clock carefully, and move from item to item smoothly but without delay so that the class is continually interested.

Leading group discussions

One aspect of facilitating is the leading of group discussions. The following will be condensation of selected literature on leading group discussions. The group discussion is probably the most used learning method in free universities and in informal adult learning situations, though initiating and leading discussion is a skill not everyone has mastered. With a few ideas about what good group process is and some practice, the teacher can become an effective group discussion facilitator.

The clue to leading a good group discussion is to keep the discussion positive and involve all members in the group (that does not necessarily mean that everyone has to be talking). By keeping the discussion positive we mean encouraging constructive disagreement, different ideas and building around an idea or exploring a concept. Negative discussion featuring dissension, trying to beat the other person, trying to establish one's own opinions as dominant, and trying to put down others' views, is counterproductive.

The first thing you want to try to do as a group leader is to eliminate judgment from your own responses, and hopefully it will catch on to the responses of others in the group. You don't want to respond to someone's comment with, "No that is wrong," or similar judgments. Instead, respond from your own point of view.

"I may be wrong, but..."
"I have a different perspective, I would say that..."
"In my own opinion, I..."
"I feel that..."

Listening to others is another important skill. This includes bringing out others. Certain responses encourage others to voice opinions or ideas.

"I sense that you..." (don't think Red China should be importing wheat from the U.S.; that you agree with what Shirley was saying)
"What I hear you saying is that..." Paraphrasing or just repeating what a person has said not only clarifies the statement for yourself and others, but also encourages the person, who knows you are really listening to what s/he is saying, to continue and perhaps enlarge upon the comment.
"Is this what you're saying...?"
"To put it another way, you would say that..."

The most constructive conversation is that in which three or four people contribute to the conversation and follow up on one idea or comment. Bringing out reactions in others is sometimes difficult.

"How do you respond to what Pat just said, Margo?"

"Is that what you would have said, Pete?"

Sometimes someone may not volunteer to talk but may show an expression of approval or disapproval. You might ask that person:

"You seemed to disagree with what Mary said, Sue..."

"You don't look like you agreed with that statement..."

In bringing out quiet people, of course, you always have to be respectful of a person's "right to silence," but often people want to speak and either can't get a word in or feel that they should be asked. If a person declines to respond after one or two invitations, drop it.

Overaggressive and talkative persons are difficult to reign in. You may have to interrupt the person and try to solicit a comment from one or two other people. You may want to try to change the subject and thus truncate the person's verbal momentum, or you may just say, "We've heard enough from Cal now, what do some of you others have to say?" Or you may have to bluntly tell the person to allow others a chance to talk. In the case of an aggressive person, often the other group members will respond to the situation. If they don't, you may want to bring the discussion more closely under your direction. By directing the comments to you for awhile, you may be able to shut off spurious or overabundant comments from one invididual. You may ignore one of his or her comments or just quietly accept the comment without response.

Sometimes it may be necessary (or just fun) to elicit the responses of everyone in the group on a particular idea or comment. You may want to do this at the beginning as an ice breaker or conversation starter; you may want to use it if the group bogs down or cannot get a discussion going; or you may want to use it just to poll group members on a particular topic.

"Let's go around and relate one experience we've had with that..."

"Let's go around the circle and quickly give the others an idea of our background..."

By putting these techniques into your own words, you can facilitate a good group discussion that will involve your participants in making an exciting class.

Evaluation

Every class gets evaluated, even if it is simply an impression in the mind of each participant. An evaluation is meant to help the participants, teacher and administration realize what the strong and weak points of the class were so that the next learning experience will be even better.

The participants can provide reactions to three aspects of the class:

1. administration
   - *was registration handled well?
   - *were the facilities arranged for?
   - *was there too little communication from the free u. administration?
2. teacher
   - *was there too much or too little reading?
   - *do you think I communicated ideas well?
   - *what techniques did you like, which ones didn't you like?
   - *what was your favorite session, why?
   - *what can I do to improve my teaching?
3. participants
   - *what problems did you have with your learning?
   - *do you feel you learned what you had expected to learn?
   - *what would you change in your own learning if you took this class over?

An evaluation should be done at the last session and should be simple. Ask questions you really want answers to. Your evaluation can be unstructured, directed or structured.

A. unstructured evaluation. Just talk about the class informally for a few minutes. What did people like, what did they not like.

B. directed evaluation. Write up a list of specific questions you want answers to before the last session. Ask the participants to respond orally as a group to each question.

C. structured evaluation. In some cases you might want a more or less formal evaluation. Each participant could fill out a questionnaire or write a few paragraphs in essay form.

Summary

A common phrase in the free university movement is, "Anybody can teach and anybody can learn." We teach others daily in many ways, offering advice to our peers, writing a letter to the newspaper, as parents, as workers. Sharing our knowledge with others is an important and stimulating part of living.

This booklet has attempted to give you some ideas on choosing a topic, planning a course, and conducting a class. With some tips on teaching adults in an info mal class setting I hope you enjoy teaching and the learning you can gain from it.